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## Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Executive Office of Education

## Charter School Application Designated Contact Person

Please provide the Executive Office of Education with the following information identifying a designated contact person for the group submitting an application for charter school status. This form *must* be filed along with the charter school application no later than February 15, 1994. Please mail all required materials to:

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Secretary of Education  
ATTN: Charter Schools  
Executive Office of Education  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

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University of Massachusetts  
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Tel: (617) 727-1313

EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
OF EDUCATION

Please print or type:

*Dabrowski Charter School*

Name of organization/group filing for charter school status

Contact Person Name:	<i>Joseph (Josh) Shaine</i>	
Signature:	<i>Joseph Shaine</i>	Date: <i>2/15/1994</i>
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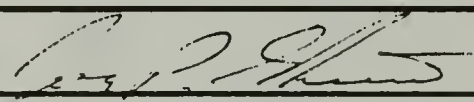
# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

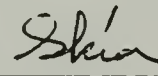
## Executive Office of Education

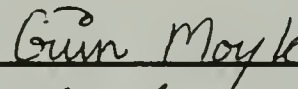
### Charter School Application

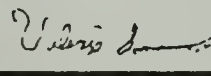
I/We, the undersigned charter school applicant(s), do hereby certify that the information provided herein and filed with the Executive Office of Education on this the 15th day of February (month) of the year 1994, is to the best of my/our knowledge, truthful and accurate.

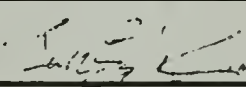
(This signature sheet *must* be attached to the application when it is filed.)

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		Zip:
		Tel:

Name:	Signature:	Date:
Address:	City:	State:
		Zip:
		Tel:

If more space is required, please attach additional sheets.

Executive Office of Education, One Ashburton Place, Room 1401, Boston, MA, 02108

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# Dabrowski Charter School

## A Proposal

For more information  
Please contact Joseph Shaine  
at 508 - 597 - 0977



## Table of Contents

Mission Statement	1
School Objectives	1
Statement of Need	2
School Demographics	3
Recruiting & Marketing Plan	4
Admissions Policy	4
Profile of Founding Coalition	5
Timetable	6
Evidence of Support	10
Education Program	10
Student Performance	11
School Evaluation, Human Resource Information	12
School Governance	13
Building Options	14
Code of Conduct	14
Special Needs Students	14
Funding	15
Accountability	15
Transportation	15
Liability and Insurance	16
Governance Documents	16

(Budget accidentally deleted - coming tomorrow)

## Mission Statement

The founding principle of the Dabrowski Charter School is that each child is an individual and should be treated that way. Every child, indeed every person, has needs in all of the following domains: Emotional, Intellectual, Psychomotor, Imaginational, and Sensual. Their needs and sensitivities vary broadly from person to person, but all students have one thing in common - if these needs are not met, the student will suffer.

## School Objectives

A. There are two kinds of academic goals to discuss. The first, and easiest, are the traditional subjects. The second set is less concrete, but more essential in the long run --- especially in the nineties.

Basic skills are essential. If one thinks about it honestly, everyone expects that our children will learn reading, math, etc. in elementary school. At the Dabrowski Charter School, we believe that it is vital that these basics should be introduced in a very personal way, with regard for the child's feelings and emotional responses. A child should never be pushed to the point of frustration: this only prompts the student to hate the subject, and frequently the teacher and the school. By individually tailoring a curriculum for each child, we can avoid those psychological blocks and enable the student to progress at a natural pace. As a result of the combination of our small class size and our approach to learning, we expect that each student will master the subjects expected of a sixth grade student - and probably before sixth grade.

The second component of the academic objectives includes fuzzy concepts such as critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and application of concepts learned to other areas. It is in the development of these areas that we expect the Dabrowski Charter School approach to education to really excel. We will both use available materials and create new ones, to enhance the students' growth in these areas. Each child's curriculum will constantly be updated to encourage the child to pursue his questions, insights, and ideas. This system is designed to allow the child to practice and

develop his own creative thinking. In addition, the teachers we select will be individuals with a passion for learning and, in a model derived more from universities than from any elementary school we know of, teachers will be encouraged to pursue their own research through the venue of the school. Though this, we hope to provide an insight into adult life usually denied to children. The students will see self-motivated adults actively engaged their own continuing growth and development: modeling the very behavior we want to encourage in our students.

B. We intend to foster the self-esteem in those students who have it and restore and build it in those who don't. A student who is healthy emotionally is a student who wants to learn. The students' affective needs and strength are paramount to us. With those needs met, the student will be better able to cope with the distractions and negative influences present in today's society.

As part of this, there will be considerable attention paid to self-assessment skills, extending from academic issues into behavioral and interpersonal areas. The goal, then, is to help develop personally and socially responsible students.

C. Through an atmosphere of respect between and among the staff members, and from the staff toward the students, we will promote an attitude of collegiality among the students, and toward the staff as well. By our helping the students to see themselves as an interdependent part of their community, both micro and macro, the Dabrowski Charter School will be filled with respect and cooperation.

### Statement of Need

A. Is it any surprise that children given a rhetoric of freedom grow up feeling betrayed, angry and alienated when processed by an educational system in which the model of mass production has been adopted as the appropriate way of raising children? We worry about basic skills and "competitiveness", but it should be no real surprise that students don't fully develop their potential in a system where the curriculum must be paced at a median that might fit a composite picture of the "average student", but which fits no living individual. Kids who learn fast become hopelessly bored. They get years of practice in tuning out. Kids who might be fine students, given a little individual attention, fail to get it and become



convinced that school is hard, boring, and not important. It's hard to say which group feels more hate and alienation.

Proponents of Ability Grouping have emphasized the need for high ability students to proceed at their own pace. Proponents of Heterogenous Grouping have emphasized the need for students to not be continuously compared to other children - and to be found either wanting or found to be superior. Ted Sizer has joked that he believes in tracking only if there is one track for every child. We think that is exactly right. It needs to be a flexible track, too.

A fully individualized curriculum meets the needs of each student, allowing for students to proceed swiftly through content that comes easily and slowly through that which is more difficult for them - without penalty for their different paces, and with the reward for progress that of increased learning rather than an arbitrary grade.

Additionally, affective needs are seldom addressd, let alone met, in most current schools. With that as the centerpiece of our curriculum, the Dabrowski Charter School stands to fill not only the students' needs, but also the need for a center of support for families.

The greatest enemies confronting today's children, and therefore society as a whole, are alienation and despair. Without a program which acknowledges and responds to these enemies, children are ill-prepared to face their future.

B. The charter school legislation provides a chance for a clean break from more traditional curricula and the presentation thereof. It further allows, and even insists upon a level of accessibility by the public unmatched by the best of the private and parochial schools. By our creating a charter school, we are making a commitment to egalitarian principles, and expressing hope for and belief in the public school approach.

## Demographics

A. We hope to put the school near Kendall Square, in Cambridge.

B. Kendall Square's proximity to the universities and to the city of Boston, coupled with a high degree of accessibility led us to make it our first choice. Nonetheless, there is nothing about our focus which particularly limits us to either that neighborhood, or even to Cambridge in particular.

C. We expect to serve a diverse population. Our admissions process will be very open.

D. We are aiming at an initial enrollment of approximately 45 students. We intend to limit the total student population to 100. An additional site would be needed before we could grow beyond that.

E. The opening year would include the equivalent of first through third grades. The full range will be through sixth grade. The teacher to student ratio, excluding the administrator, would be 1 to 9.

### Recruiting & Marketing Plan:

A. While the media observation of the charter school process supplies a large amount of coverage, we will utilize Cambridge specific media, such as the Chronicle and the Tab, to publicize our program. In addition, placement of bulletins in children's bookstores, such as Savanna Books, libraries, and other community centers will help to spread the word.

B. We will work with both "current" applicant families, and families whose children are not yet of school age, to support the children's growth, and to better prepare them for school - ours or others. Services will include a variety of group and individual meetings, as well as referral to external resources, as appropriate.

### Admission Policy

A. We see admissions as a mutual decision. We will meet with the child and his family to discuss the school and the particular interests and needs of the student. Together, we will decide whether we are a good fit.

As we are aimed at the younger ages of the school spectrum, there can be no "academic achievement" standards for us to apply. We do want our students to be toilet trained, and to be talking - one way or another.

B. As the school actively seeks a diverse group of students, this policy should support our mission in that regard. Beyond that, our mission is not bound to any specific ability or background.



Any restrictions we might put on the population of students could do little to help, and much to hinder, our goals.

### Profile of Founding Coalition

A. The Drabowski Charter School founding coalition is comprised of parents, teachers, <sup>students</sup> and business people who share a belief in the importance of individualization in education. Our members come from diverse experiences in schooling, with parents whose children have been home-schooled and in public, private, and parochial schools in the United States as well as abroad. Some of us are experienced public and private school teachers and administrators, and others have worked as volunteers. Others have worked with universities, such as M.I.T., and Museums, such as the Museum of Science and Arbaejarsafn in Reykjavik, Iceland, in their education programs.

B. The connections between us can be traced as far back as 1977. Some of us met through the M.I.T. Educational Studies Program, and others through conventions or while working in schools. While the group doesn't have any specific affiliation with another organization, individuals belong to a variety of associations.

C. There are a number of other individuals in whom we are interested, including a day care provider, a graduate education professor, a plasma physicist, and a coordinator of minority education.

## Timetable

- A. March 15, 1994 -  
Receive charter (yeah!)  
Begin weekly meetings  
Preparation of grant applications
- March - April 1994  
Place ads for Administrator and Teachers  
Schedule meeting with Real Estate Office  
Schedule meeting with Banks  
Begin filing grant applications  
Schedule group interviews with potential administrators and teachers  
Begin community meetings and workshops  
Meet with other charter schools  
Revise proposed budget
- May - June, 1994  
Select Finalists for Administrator  
Continue meetings and workshops  
Continue Financing and Real Estate discussions  
Select Administrator  
Select Finalists for teachers  
Revise proposed budget  
Select Teachers  
Full meeting of Trustees and Staff  
Create committees  
Select potential buildings  
Contact area businesses
- July - August 1994  
Revise proposed budget  
Meet with bank  
Grant proposal follow-up  
Draft and distribute brochures  
Draft student applications  
Develop and place advertisements
- Sept. - Oct. 1994  
Revise proposed budget  
Begin scheduling family visits  
Meeting with Bank  
Meeting with Real Estate Firm



Nov. - Dec. 1994	Continue family visits Continue site selection process
January - Feb. 1995	Admit families (students) create waiting list finalize site selection
March - April 1995	Meeting with bank Staff/Students/Family meetings Acquire funding for site Start school-year volunteer recruitment
May - June, 1995	Acquire funding for off-set fiscal year Identify physical and personel resources which are needed beyond the current proposed budget Create and circulate wish list Continue workshops and conferences Discussion with Cambridge Public Schools about transportation
July - Aug. 15, 1995	Move into facility Identify and resolve problem spots Prepare facility (painting, etc.) Conversations with other charter schools
August 22, 1995	Community Open House Prepare final list for opening purchases
August 29, 1995	Staff last minute brainstorming session
September 6, 1995	Teachers report
September 7, 1995	School Opens

B. In the event that the date should be advanced to September 1994, obviously, the time-table gets compacted. These dates are even more approximate, as we will be more subject to the market possibilities in renting versus buying space, for example.

March 15, 1994 -	Receive charter Begin weekly meetings Preparation of grant applications
March 17, 1994 -	Place ads for Administrator and Teachers Schedule meeting with Real Estate Office Schedule meeting with Banks
March 19, 1994	Begin filing grant applications Schedule group interviews with prospective administrators and teachers
April 15 - 30, 1994	Begin community meetings and workshops Meet with other charter schools Revise proposed budget Acquire funding for off-set fiscal year
May - June, 1994	Finish selection and hiring of Administrator and teachers Continue meetings and workshops Continue Financing and Real Estate discussions Revise proposed budget Full meeting of Trustees and Staff Create committees Select potential buildings Contact area businesses
July 1 - 17, 1994	Revise proposed budget Meet with bank Grant proposal follow-up Draft and distribute brochures Draft student applications Develop and place advertisements Revise proposed budget Begin scheduling family visits



	Meeting with Bank Meeting with Real Estate Firm Contact utility companies
July 18 - 24, 1994	Continue family visits Continue site selection process Discussion with Cambridge Public Schools about transportation
July 25 - 31, 1994	Admit families (students) Create waiting list Finalize site selection
August 1 - 7	Meeting with bank Staff/Students/Family meetings Start school-year volunteer recruitment
August 8 - 14, 1994	Identify physical and personel resources which are needed beyond the current proposed budget Create and circulate wish list Continue workshops and conferences
August 15 - 27, 1994	Move into facility Identify and resolve problem spots Prepare facility (painting, etc.) Conversations with other charter schools
August 28, 1994	Community Open House Prepare final list for opening purchases
August 29, 1994	Staff last minute brainstorming session
September 5, 1994	Teachers report
September 6, 1994	School Opens

## Evidence of Support

A. The interest expressed at a number of parent meetings, including meetings at M.I.T. and Harvard University, suggest a strong interest in not only an alternative to the schools currently available, but in this alternative.

B. Letters from parents and other members of the community will be presented on or before February 23rd.

## Educational Program

A. Massachusetts law ( Statute 71B) states that special needs students must be educated to the maximum possible development of their potential. We see the Dabrowski Charter School as applying this philosophy to all students.

The Education Program at the Dabrowski Charter School will consist of four primary components: a.) Interaction between staff members or volunteer tutors and individual students or small groups, b.) On-going scheduled symposia in both basic skills development and special interests, c.) A variety of stimulating one-time events, such special presentations or field trips, and d.) Special activity areas designed to fascilitate quite study, messy projects, or boisterous play.

Students will direct their own time and decide on their own activities, but each will have a primary staff member who is responsible for making sure they don't "fall through the cracks". It would be up to this person to keep in touch with the day to day experience of the child and to make suggestions and facilitate dialog between the student, his parents and the school. This person would also be in charge of coordinating the preparation of school records and reports for the students in his charge.

During the first week of the term the child, his primary teacher and his guardians will get together to discuss the child's needs and develop goals for the upcoming session.

More on this section will follow on March 1.



B. This school is following the teachings of John Dewey, who noted that the child is the curriculum, and Kazamierz Dabrowski, a Polish psychiatrist and psychologist. It has also developed through examination of programs such as the Sudbury Valley School and the Roeper City and Country School, in Michigan, though it is distinct in curriculum and mission from each of those.

C. The Dabrowski Charter School will, for the most part, adhere to the calendar of the local public schools, so that our students can take advantage of community summer programs and to allow families with children in more than one school to take vacations together.

The school would be open from 7:30 - 5:30 with parents choosing the hours their child would attend. Parents would commit to a regular schedule, so that children will not be penalized by their parent's possible disorganization. People who want to do a portion of home schooling would have no minimum number of hours and we would make activity lists available. This option would only be made available to parents who can show that they have a strong commitment to being involved in the education of their child, and present the school with an education plan which involves home school or community based education which address goals or provide facilities not possible within the school itself.

### Student Performance

A. Our system of evaluation will seek to answer two questions: 1.) Is the child making progress? and 2.) Has the child mastered the basic knowledge and skills he needs to do well in the future? To address these questions, a five-part evaluation will be completed every term. Each child's primary teacher would be in charge of coordinating the preparation of his evaluation.

Part one of the evaluation will be a short summary of the child's needs and personal and academic goals going into the term, how these were addressed, what new issues arose during the term and how those were dealt with. This section would be written by the primary teacher with input from the child and other involved parties.

Parts two, three and four would be short evaluations of how well the child's needs were met, the child's general progress and

Part five of the evaluation would be concrete - a list books read and activities completed during the term.

B. Evaluations are necessary. Both parents and students need to have some affirmation that their perceptions of the way things are going are shared by the school. Evaluations are a means of communication between the school and the home. The process of making a formal evaluation can pin-point trouble spots so that extra help can be offered before large problems arise.

C. In addition to the above-mentioned subjective evaluations of progress by teachers, parents and the students themselves, required standardized testing will provide an objective measure of how well students are acquiring basic skills.

### School Evaluation

A. We are inclined to follow the guidelines for evaluation as laid out in Worthen and White, Evaluating Educational and Social Programs (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff), 1987. Part of a student's evaluation process will include an evaluation by the student of the school, as noted above. We will also utilize externally devised measures to aid us in determining that our objectives are being met. We would also be interested in sharing in a group evaluation process with the other charter schools.

B. Parents will be encouraged to come to school on a weekly basis, as part of their child's education. They will talk with teachers, administrators and trustees about their child's experience at the school, and their own reactions as well. The school will hold monthly meetings, which will be open to and frequently invite guests from the community. Our intention is to make the community part of the school, as well as to make the school part of the community.

### Human Resource Information

A. The Board of Trustees will advertise for teachers, as well as soliciting applications from some teachers already known to them. Primary areas of competence for a Dabrowski teacher include empathy, confidence, a belief that every student can learn, and an awareness that the teacher is not the repository of knowledge, but, rather a guide through the questions. We will request recommendations from past students as well as employers, and we



will have group interviews, to observe their interactions with other adults, as well as our student interviewers, in our quest to identify the best four to seven staff members. Knowledge of subjects and of the age group will also be factors.

B. All staff will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Staff development is a shared responsibility, with the Trustees taking the lead, but sharing with the rest of the team. Observation of teaching will be followed by reflection and conversation. Formal evaluations will be offered in a teacher's first month, at the end of the first term, and twice more, before the end of the year. Returning teachers will receive two formal evaluations each year, unless an issue arises.

C. Salaries are expected to run in the \$25,000-30,000 per year range. Staff development will take four forms: Internal Mandatory, External Mandatory, Internal Optional and External Optional. The Mandatory forms will be part of the direct compensation package, and will usually take the form of group development. The Optional forms can be either group or individual activities, and may be instigated by any member of the school community, including businesses in the area or students. They may take the form of conferences, and workshops, or just a movie. These Options can be applied for, as additional compensation.

### School Governance

A. Initially, the school will be governed by the trustees. When an administrator has been selected, most day-to-day tasks will fall to that person. As the rest of the staff takes shape, more chores will be shared, with decisions being made by consensus when possible, and by majority when necessary. The administrator will break ties.

B. The first Trustees will be selected by the founding coalition. The Board's membership will subsequently be determined by staff, parents, students and community.

C. The Board's first and greatest role will be to create the first staff. Other tasks will include approval of major contracts, oversight of the school mission, and interaction with the office of the Secretary of Education and with the school district.

D. The Board is both answerable to the families, students, administrators and teachers and a source of support to them.

E. Parents and students must be involved in the determination of school constitution, guidelines, hiring, and selection of new Trustees.

F. Community involvement derives from two sources - the residents and the businesses. Each brings value to a school. The resources of the individuals in either setting will offer our school a source of ideas, experiences and backgrounds that no budget could give us. We expect to have the students into the community, and we plan to bring members of our neighborhood into the school.

### Building Options

A-C. We are seeking a building in either the Kendall Square or Cambridgeport areas, using local realty offices, and the MIT Property office.

D. While this area can not be dealt with in any depth, our most ambitious hopes are to purchase a building, using a five year, low interest loan. We have had preliminary discussions with a couple of banks, and believe that this is conceivable.

### Code of Conduct

A. The basic code of conduct will be in accord with local and Commonwealth law. Further guidelines, as well as the constitution, will be formed with student participation.

B. Our suspension and expulsion policies will adhere to the state guidelines.

### Special Needs Students

All students will be welcome at the Dabrowski Charter School. In particular, we feel that our program can excel at meeting the needs of students with some learning disabilities - especially those with Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Defecit with Hyperactivity Disorder. Any prospective student's special needs should be brought to our attention at the time of application.



## Funding

Initially our sole source of funds will be derived from the per student allotment. As many schools and systems do, we will pursue supplemental means of support. Some of these will include granting organizations such as the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and others will include in-kind contributions from Cambridge companies, which will reduce some of our materials expenses.

## Accountability

- A. The Trustees will adhere to M.G.L. c.71, s. 89 through maintenance of appropriate records, and will make them available to the public through local libraries. The Administrator will produce the Annual Report.
- B. In addition to the required audit process for not-for-profit corporations, the Board of Trustees will receive monthly reports from an accountant.
- C. All documents prepared as part of the students' files will be preserved in accordance with public school law. Assembly and dissemination of school information will be in accordance with State and federal law, as well.

## Transportation

- A. Transportation within the local district will be comprised of two parts. Local students, as the district defines them, will be required to provide their own transportation, if they choose not to walk, except as special needs may dictate. For those students outside of the walking radius of the Charter School, we will work with the Cambridge School Department to ensure ease and efficiency of transportation.
- B. Our intention is to be near public transportation, in order to increase accessibility of the Charter School to out-of-district parents, in the event that not all places are claimed by in-district students. In addition, we will abide by the school choice dictums established by Cambridge. We will also assist parents in their sharing of responsibility for other out-of-district transportation.

## Liability and Insurance

A. We will engage an insurance company to assess and provide for our needs. We have entered into discussion with Bruce Thompson of Samson Insurance on this issue.

B. As we have yet to acquire a building, for us to provide such documents as an inspection certificate would be premature, not to mention impossible.

## Governance Documents

Articles of Incorporation will be forwarded within a week. Other documents will be forthcoming as they are developed. Some, such as the school constitution, may be presented in draft form, as student input will be essential to their finalization.